

City of Corunna
Regular Council Meeting
Monday, October 21, 2002

Present: Corey, Jessen, Johnson, Mehigh, Runyan, Sanderson, Wagner.

Absent: None.

Guests: Joe Sawyer, City Manager; Janet Washburn, Parks and Recreation Director; Judy Horton; Shirley Sanderson; Clark Long; Bob Ockerman; Bill Lulham; Helen Granger, The Independent; Gary Granger; Dick Sanderson; Sgt. Kevin Clark, Police Department; Gary Blahnik; Merilee Lawson, City Planner & Assessor; and other concerned citizens.

The meeting was called to order in the City Council Chambers by Mayor Corey at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS REGULAR MEETING: Runyan moved, Sanderson seconded to approve the regular meeting minutes of October 7, 2002 as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson, Runyan, Jessen, Mehigh.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

AGENDA APPROVAL: Mehigh moved, Johnson seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Jessen, Runyan, Mehigh, Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

APPROVAL OF VENDOR DISBURSEMENTS: Wagner moved, Johnson seconded to approve the vendor disbursements as presented.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Wagner, Jessen, Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

Mayor Corey presented a proclamation to Gary Blahnik recognizing October 20-26, 2002 as Michigan's Safe School Week. Johnson moved, Mehigh seconded to accept the proclamation recognizing October 20-26, 2002 as Michigan's Safe School Week.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson, Jessen, Wagner, Runyan.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CALL TO AUDIENCE: Helen Granger advised the Civil War Ball held at the community

center on Saturday was very successful. She passed out several pictures for council to review that were taken at the ball. She further advised there were guests from Canada, Ohio, Illinois, and from Michigan present. She also advised the community center is a wonderful building for this type of event especially the hard wood floor upstairs.

Bob Ockerman advised he was present because he just read the news report about the new snow shovel ordinance and wanted to state what he thinks will happen. There will be many complaints, and he hopes the city council has thought the ordinance through very thoroughly. He further advised when it is time to plow the driveway or sidewalk, the older people, who do not have the equipment, will have to hire and pay someone to clear their driveway and sidewalk or they will be fined after 24 hours. He also advised a lot of people live in town for the services that they get and plowing sidewalks is something this city has done for many years. Mr. Ockerman stated he thought the ordinance was a tremendous disservice to the city residents. He further stated the business owners downtown are fixing up their buildings and now this is something else that will have to be done. He asked if there would be a fine if the snow was not removed and what the fine would be. Mr. Ockerman reported four and one-half years ago the city's fund balance was \$150,000 and today it is \$500,000. He heard from a councilperson that plowing snow was a city liability issue, but this is what cities do. It is a fact that cities have sidewalks and they are needed for safety issues. He further reported the city has schools in this town and there are kids who walk in the street. If these issues are not addressed, then the city will have problems it does not want. He also reported the city will have more liability if the kids have to walk in the street. Mayor Corey advised there has been a great deal of discussion about the very issues Mr. Ockerman was talking about and money was an issue. In addition, there was a matter of time involved by the department of public works. Mayor Corey further advised a public hearing was held before the ordinance was adopted and the fine for not clearing the sidewalk is \$100. Mr. Ockerman advised citizens only have 24 hours to clear their sidewalks, but when the city cleared the sidewalks, the sidewalks were cleared as a last resort and he does not see any fairness there. Mayor Corey stated he did not think it was the intent of council not to replace sidewalks since there is a sidewalk replacement program in place. Mr. Ockerman suggested spreading the cost of replacing sidewalks throughout the entire city so the burden is not put on one property owner. He stated people live in town for the services they get and if services are taken away, people begin to wonder what they get for their taxes.

Bill Lulham stated he has lived in the city for over 40 years, and the city has always cleaned the sidewalks. He further stated the council should remember the kids who use the sidewalks to go to school. Mr. Lulham advised the city has a master plan for sidewalks that should be reviewed. He also stated the city streets are terrible. He asked what the procedure was to get the traffic slowed down especially on Norton Street and W. McNeil Street because there are some kids who have to walk in the street. He asked if the residents have to petition the city to get someone to patrol or slow down the traffic on Norton Street. The police department drive down the street once in a while but the police department does not really see what the problem is. Mayor Corey suggested contacting Mark Hetfield. Mr. Lulham advised he did that and has even contacted the

state police about policing Norton Street and was told the local police have to do it, but the local police department is not doing the job. He asked what he should do. Mayor Corey advised Mr. Lulham to make a written complaint.

CONSIDER RESIGNATION OF DR. JAMES BILLIS FROM THE PLANNING

COMMISSION: Jessen moved, Johnson seconded to accept the resignation of Dr. James Billis from the planning commission with regret.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Mehigh, Jessen, Runyan, Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO MID-COUNTY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE: Johnson

moved, Sanderson seconded to appoint Don Mehigh and Joe Sawyer to the Mid-County Development Committee and to appoint Larry Runyan as alternate to the Mid-County Development Committee.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Johnson, Sanderson, Wagner, Mehigh, Runyan, Jessen.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF PREIN & NEWHOF REVIEW: Runyan moved, Sanderson

seconded to approve the payment of \$5,000 to Prein & Newhof for the water feasibility study to be paid for from the water contractual services line item 591-556-818.000.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson, Runyan, Jessen, Mehigh.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

CONSIDER APPOINTMENTS TO THE LIBRARY AD-HOC COMMITTEE: Councilperson

Johnson advised she did not think the Library Ad-hoc Committee was a good avenue for council to go with. She felt the committee would end up becoming a headhunt, and she does not want to go on the ad-hoc committee. Councilperson Mehigh stated he was uncomfortable with having the advisory board members on the committee instead of members of the Library Board and he felt the advisory board members have no business being on the ad-hoc committee in the first place. Councilperson Sanderson stated he agreed with Councilpersons Johnson and Mehigh, and if something needs to be discussed, then it should be discussed with the city council. He further stated the council would be outnumbered five to three. Councilperson Mehigh suggested postponing a decision until council comes up with another process. He asked Councilperson Johnson what she would like to see done. Councilperson Johnson advised she was very uncomfortable with the ad-hoc committee and suggested striking down the committee all together. Councilperson Mehigh stated Owosso Charter Township and Caledonia Charter Township are looking at the feasibility of involving the city and county in a district library, and he felt other options should be explored in order to get a larger library. Mayor Corey asked council if they wanted to respond to the library board in

writing that the city council does not to go forward with the ad-hoc committee at this time. Mr. Sawyer stated he believes most of the problems have been resolved. The city is not charging the library administration fees since there was a reduction in their appropriation. He further stated he has ordered the city treasurer to rebate the cost of the library's sidewalk assessment and give the money back to the library. This issue will come back to council at a future meeting because council will have to decide how to pay for the sidewalk. He also stated he does not know what the library board's questions or issues are. He composed a very detailed letter to the library board, which outlines and discusses several issues, but he has not received a response. Mayor Corey stated it appears the library board wants to rehash old stuff. Councilperson Johnson agreed. Mayor Corey asked if a motion should be made to address a letter to the library board. Johnson moved, Sanderson seconded to instruct the city manager and mayor to address a letter to the library board advising them that the ad-hoc committee is not a forum the city council wants to use to discuss issues.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Jessen, Runyan, Mehig, Wagner, Johnson, Sanderson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

REVIEW PROPOSED FENCE ORDINANCE: Councilperson Mehig stated it sounds like the entire fence ordinance needs to be critiqued so it can have a better flow. He suggested postponing the ordinance until a later date. Mr. Sawyer asked the city assessor/planner, Merilee Lawson, to review the proposed language for the front yard fence ordinance that she prepared. Ms. Lawson stated she needed to know if it was council's intention to allow decorative fencing in single-family homes only. The proposed ordinance will allow decorative fencing in single-family occupied homes only, but the current fence ordinance states single-family and two-family zoning, but the city does not have any two-family zoning. She further stated she has compiled a list of several types of decorative fencing that would be feasible for a front yard. The ordinance should fit the majority and allow a loophole for the minority. She also stated the planning commission's biggest concern was maintenance enforcement. She asked if the city charter gives the city approval to handle maintenance issues if the property owners do not maintain their fences. Ms. Lawson advised the fence would have to be placed on the property and not in the right-of-way. Councilperson Mehig asked if person who owns a duplex would have an option. Ms. Lawson advised the property owner could take the issue to the zoning board of appeals for a decision. Councilperson Sanderson stated the city council would like to see decorative fencing, but the planning commission does not want to see this type of fencing. He does not see where a front yard fence would be a major problem. He further stated it appears the city and the planning commission is making a mountain out of a molehill. The city should move forward with the ordinance in order to brighten up the city a little. Councilperson Runyan asked if the ordinance would go through the planning commission once it is adopted. Ms. Lawson advised no. Once a public hearing is held and a vote is taken, the ordinance is adopted. Councilperson Runyan asked if a person has to go to the planning commission for permission to put up the fence. Ms. Lawson advised no, a person would have to fill out a fence permit. Councilperson Sanderson asked what a fence permit would cost. Ms. Lawson advised \$25.00. Mayor

Corey asked council if they thought the decorative fencing should be for single-family occupied homes or for larger groups. He called for a consensus from council on what council wanted to do, and four councilpersons were in favor of allowing decorative fencing for single-family occupied homes and two councilpersons were in favor of allowing decorative fencing for larger groups. Councilperson Sanderson asked how single-family occupied would affect N. Shiawassee Street. Ms. Lawson advised anyone with single-family occupied property would be allowed to have the decorative fencing. Mr. Sawyer advised everyone would have the option to go to the zoning board of appeals. Mayor Corey asked council if they wanted to take any action or if they wanted to table the item until the next meeting. It sounds like there are a couple of issues that Mr. Sawyer was working on. Ms. Lawson advised she would like to review and correct the entire fence ordinance. Mr. Sawyer reviewed the changes that need to be clarified or removed in the existing ordinance. Mehigh moved, Sanderson seconded to table the proposed fence ordinance until the next meeting.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Runyan, Wagner, Jessen, Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION: Councilperson Sanderson advised the Forest Management Commission planted five trees on Sunday. He thanked Davis Nursery and Cub Scout Den #409 for their help with the tree planting and Tim Crawford and the city workers for digging the holes. Councilperson Sanderson stated Rick Croteau has done an outstanding job for the ambulance service and he should be commended. Councilperson Sanderson further stated the ambulance service is in good shape and has money in excess of \$9,000 on hand. Mr. Croteau finds something new everyday that will help solve the problems that have built up over the years.

Councilperson Mehigh advised Mr. Croteau has received all of the billing information from the previous billing company. He reported the intergovernmental committee is starting to flow pretty well, and he believes the committee will lead to a good thing.

Mayor Corey thanked Councilperson Sanderson and the Forest Management Commission for becoming active and seeing to the planting of the trees. He also thanked the Fourth of July Commission for their \$1,750 donation for the new restroom facility and for upgrading the electrical service in the park and the Softball Commission for their \$1,500 donation for the grandstand shingles.

Councilperson Sanderson asked who selected the trees that are being cut down. Mr. Sawyer advised Mr. Crawford as well as the homeowners who have called in to report their trees. Councilperson Sanderson stated he noticed a tree had been cut down at the corner of Williams Street and Woodworth Street but he did not see anything wrong with the tree. Mr. Sawyer advised usually there is disease or infestation, which is an area that he is not qualified in. He further advised he is sensing that the Forest Management Commission wants to get more involved in the tree removal process and he and Mr. Crawford welcome that. Mr. Sawyer also advised he would like to see a list of suspect

trees be given to the Forest Management Commission and let them decide which trees to remove. Mayor Corey stated that is the way it should be done.

ADJOURN: Mehigh moved, Jessen seconded to adjourn.

Roll call vote:

Yes: Sanderson, Mehigh, Johnson, Jessen, Wagner, Runyan.

No: None.

Motion CARRIED Time was 8:14 p.m.

STEVE COREY, MAYOR

LINDA M. LeCUREUX, DEPUTY CLERK